Statement by the ITF Secretary-General, Young Tae Kim

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this session on behalf of the International Transport Forum (ITF).

The ITF stands firmly behind the ambition of inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, and we believe that transport needs to be at the heart of that vision.

Transport is more than just a means of movement. It is a critical enabler of access to opportunities, such as education, jobs, healthcare, and markets. It shapes people's ability to participate fully in society. But too often, mobility systems leave behind those who need them most.

The ITF report, *Sustainable Accessibility for All*, calls for a shift in thinking. Rather than focusing solely on infrastructure or speed, we must ask: who can access what, and under what conditions?

This means addressing the mobility needs of older persons, persons with disabilities, low-income groups, and those living

in rural or peripheral areas. Accessibility must be designed into our systems from the outset.

Inclusivity also requires recognising and supporting the informal transport sector. Millions in the region rely daily on minibuses, tuk-tuks, motorcycle taxis and other informal services. These modes often fill essential gaps, especially for underserved communities.

Our recent report on *Incorporating Informal Transport in Mobility Planning* shows how integrating informal operators into planning processes can enhance connectivity, reduce emissions, and improve working conditions. The formalisation of informal transport must be inclusive, not punitive.

Yet inclusion alone is not enough. The region is also confronted with the significant challenge of reducing carbon emissions in transportation. If left unaddressed, increasing demand could lead to locking in high emissions.

Through our *Decarbonising Transport in Emerging Economies* initiative and the *Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia (SIPA)*, we support governments in countries such as Azerbaijan, India, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Uzbekistan to develop evidence-based pathways aligned with their climate goals.

In Central and Southeast Asia, the *SIPA* studies also help identify investment strategies that make transport networks more efficient and sustainable. Whether through cleaner vehicles, freight corridors, or better urban mobility planning,

our goal is to support practical, implementable measures that reduce CO_2 emissions and improve resilience.

These projects share a common thread, with policy grounded in evidence and co-developed with local partners. Our modelling tools help decision-makers test scenarios and make informed choices. This is especially important in a region where today's policy decisions will shape infrastructure and emissions for decades to come.

Excellencies, colleagues, regional cooperation is essential. Transport systems and emissions do not stop at borders. The ITF supports efforts across Asia and the Pacific to align strategies, share knowledge, and advance a common vision for transport that is clean, inclusive, and future-ready.

As we look ahead, the ITF remains a committed partner. We will continue to provide data, insights, and a platform for dialogue to help countries translate their ambitions into action. Together, we can ensure that no one is left behind on the journey to sustainable development.

Thank you.